DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 038 123 JC 700 090

AUTHOR	Blai, Boris, Jr.
TITLE	Junior College Appraisal Techniques.
INSTITUTION	Harcum Junior Coll., Bryn Mawr, Pa.
REPORT NO	IRR-70-17
PUB DATE	70
NOTE	10p.
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.60
DESCRIPTORS	Evaluation, *Evaluation Techniques, *Institutional Research, Institutional Role, *Junior Colleges, *Program Evaluation

ABSTRACT

Junior college self-appraisal techniques should involve research and should be conducted within the academic, vocational, and adult education programs of the college. This report considers appraisal of specific areas, such as admissions, counseling and student personnel services, placement in classes, and program planning and evaluation. Sixteen evaluation needs and techniques are given that are appropriate for self-appraisal at the junior college level. With these recommendations as a guide, research can be incorporated into all aspects of junior college programs. (RC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED038123

JUNIOR COLLEGE APPRAISAL

TECHNIQUES

Office of Research

HARCUM JUNIOR COLLEGE

Bryn Mawr, Penna.

JC 700 090

(IRR 70-17)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

APR 01 1970

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

ED038123

HARCUM JUNIOR COLLEGE
BRYN MAWR. PENNA. 19010

Junior College Self-Appraisal Techniques

General

Self-appraisal, or institutional research in American education has deep roots. According to W. H. Cowley, it goes back to 1701 when Increase Mather, then president of Harvard, acted as an educational consultant to the founders of Yale. (1)

It is impossible not to be impressed, perhaps even a bit overwhelmed, by the growth and diversity of the two-year college sector of American higher education. To cite but a few facts indicating the phenomenal rate of growth of junior colleges:

...new institutions are being added at the rate of one each month to the approximate 1000 that now exist.

...the largest student body in any Florida educational institution is that of Miami-Dade Junior College.

...Today junior colleges enroll almost as many freshmen across the country as to 4-year colleges. Junior in name only, there are now 2-year colleges in each of these 50 United States.

...Seattle Community College opened in 1967 with an initial enrollment of 12,688.

For a variety of sound educational reasons, all colleges should gather information about their students. In this regard, the junior college is somewhat unique. In addition to serving many of the traditional purposes of other types of colleges, it has most of the four-year college informational needs and some additional special needs as a junior college.

"Practically any question one can raise about the educational enterprise can be formulated as a testable hypothesis, and by exercising imagination and patience, one can usually test the hypothesis so as to get a reasonable indication of whether the opportunities we provide students make a measureable difference in the kinds of thinking they habitually do and the kinds of people they become." (2)

Role of Research in Education

Educational progress without change is unthinkable; change without research could be disasterous.

---

(1) Henry S. Dyer. "Can Institutional Research lead to a Science of Institutions?" The Educational Record. Fall 1966, American Council on Education. Washington, D.C. pp 452-466

(2) op cit. p. 485

Basic research, of value to education, is being carried on in education at a constantly accelerated pace. It can be classed as "discovery" research, where break-throughs may occur; or as "theory related". Discovery research pushes back barriers of the unknown and the advantages are long-term. Theory-related research may add to our knowledge of buttressing or destroying certain theories, or by providing a basis for new theory.

"Developmental" research, on the other hand, includes a wide variety of research endeavor. It may be found as applied research, adapting findings from research to practical situations. It may be specifically aimed at finding solutions to a real, current problem. It is sometimes product research with the end product a program using or developing the newer media; or perhaps curriculum research designed to produce new curricula. When the focus in developmental research is on the programs and activities of the college, inclusive of assessment, workflow, progress, methodology, etc., we term it institutional research.

All research activities can be categorized as: (1) experiments, (2) surveys, (3) investigations, and (4) studies. All are functionally necessary and make essential contributions to a comprehensive, well-balanced, educational research program. We depend largely on carefully controlled experiments, perhaps with replication, to help in producing theory. Surveys provide us with descriptive pictures of what the situation is, how people react in various situations, etc. Investigations normally use an adequate sample, however the instruments employed may lack validity, while studies, be they "case", 'historical," or "philosophical," can obviously contribute in a variety of ways.

However, a word of caution is in order. The potentiality for research contributing to educational advance is great, but there are limitations. Research should not be oversold. There is a time scale involved, as with education. Miracles simply won't happen overnight.

There is also considerable misunderstanding about what research can do. It is not decision-making, nor is it likely to provide 'pat' solutions to complex problems and situations. Its advantages come from using small representative samples; controlling variables; using control groups; using replication where desirable in the process of arriving at dependable solutions to educational problems through the planned, orderly, systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of appropriate data. It can be directed toward seeking solutions to problems in any number of situations as a means of attaining worthwhile educational goals.

In order that it may better serve its community, as well as its range of students of many and varied characteristics, junior college self-appraisal techniques should involve the systematic gathering of information in connection with the following functions and purposes. For this article, "self-appraisal techniques" or institutional research methods, are considered to include the

variety of methods and know-how, as well as tangible instruments and published procedures for gathering and evaluating institution-related information.

A - Admissions Counseling

1. Academic

In this area, junior colleges have available numerous techniques and instruments for gathering student-related information. Among these are: (1) the high school record, (2) high school test scores, (3) non-high school test scores such as the College Board battery, American College Testing Program, National Merit Scholarship program, state and/or regional scholarship competitions.

The task here for the junior college to accomplish is to ascertain whether such information items of record are helpful for prediction of successful junior college academic/non-academic achievements.

2. Vocational

To counsel students about vocational education opportunities, all sources cited in Admissions Counseling 1. Academic, above, should be utilized. However, these should be augmented by additional data not developed by the high school. Such might include measures of vocational interest and preference, (Hackman-Gaither Vocational Interests Inventory; Strong Vocational Interests Blank; Kuder Preference Record); and of vocational aptitude, (Differential Aptitude Tests, Flanagan Aptitude Classification Battery). Of paramount importance in both vocational and academic admissions counseling is awareness of the fact that none of these measuring devices, (test and inventories), is of much value for admissions counseling until it has been validated for success prediction in a given course at a given college. The relationship between "success" on the test-inventory and "success" in a specific course can be determined. If the relationship is determined to be a close one, i.e., the student who does well on the test or inventory also does well in the course; scores on the test or inventory are then useful in forecasting course success. The measuring instrument is then of practical value in admissions counseling.

3 - Other

In some communities there are substantial numbers of adults who seek further educational opportunities. In a variety of both credit and non-credit courses, they seek academic, vocational, or just self-improvement courses, offered at hours when they can attend without having to give up their jobs. A broad-based question should form the basis for sound admissions counseling; is the individual reasonably well-equipped with the necessary "tools of learning" -- reading, writing and figuring, to entertain reasonable expectations of success in the desired course?

In short -- tests of academic ability developed and administered by the college, and normed on adults out of school, can be a most helpful tool for admissions counselors.

B - Placement in Appropriate Courses

1 - Academic

Sectioning into appropriate level courses is a major responsibility in this area. If used accurately and insightfully, the data employed in admissions counseling (test scores and academic records) can be further utilized here. Such assistance is particularly necessary for those departments offering a 'smorgasbord' of freshmen courses in which case it is advisable to develop a test in the form of a work sample which can be given to incoming students in order to help estimate where they ought to start in that department's program.

2 - Vocational

Here the task is particularly complex, for with the applicant for vocational instruction, the junior college has to do just about everything that it does with the academic student in connection with placement, (for the vocational student also takes academic courses). In addition, there is the task of appropriate placement in the vocational program. Such tests as might be utilized here must be validated for the particular courses. This is a difficult and highly technical task in which situations are devised in which students can demonstrate the degree to which they have already developed the skills for which the vocational instruction is designed.

3 - Other

Suitable placement of an adult in appropriate courses calls upon the same skills and tools available for the younger student course placement activities. Perhaps the one major difference generally to be expected is the extent or degree of motivation. Going to school is expected of youth, with only indirect measures available to assess the level of academic motivation. The most obvious and frequently employed criterion is the level of achievement the youth has demonstrated in his previous academic exposures. Typically, however, for the adult student, the very fact that he is applying for further schooling during hours that otherwise might be devoted to "rest and recreation" is usually face-evidence that substantial motivation is present.

C - Counseling Students in College

1 - Educational

Such counseling embraces interpretation of what the college knows about these academic students in the light of the educational choices open to them. These include: (1) Choices of courses and curricula for the next year; (2) Choices of

institutions to which transfer is sought after the second year; (3) Choices of courses and curricula in the 4-year institutions to which transfer is sought.

As might be anticipated, just as the prediction of success between secondary school-college articulation is best achieved by consideration of the student's previous record, so, in the case of seeking collegiate advanced-standing transfer, the prior collegiate record is still the best single predictor of projected future performance.

Unfortunately, the single largest element which is missing in 2-year to 4-year college articulation is detailed experience data to describe the 4-year college the student is considering. To do an effective, realistic job of educational counseling, the junior college must obtain information about former students who have transferred. This requires follow-up studies of the junior college's former students -- another complex and highly technical task.

2 - Vocational

Since some students are prone to transfer between 'vocational' and 'academic' programs, it is advisable to provide some educational counseling to all students. Among other necessary information, it is particularly germane that vocational counselors have readily available, current labor-market information as well as up-dated data regarding the student's vocational qualifications. In a very real sense, this is similar to the follow-up procedures in keeping track of the 'employers' of transfer students; the 4-year colleges to which they transfer.

3 - Credit Transfers to Senior Institutions

Beyond the essential task of gathering pertinent information relating to both student and institutional characteristics, which task is absolutely necessary for realistic counseling of academic students, there is a basic need for clear, uncluttered student data which is transmitted to the senior institution. Both good materials and know-how for doing this task effectively are, or can readily be made available to most counselors. Ideally, two kinds of evidence can be furnished to senior institutions: (1) the student's junior college academic record, along with a clearly stated legend which translates the code used in grading and recording academic achievements; (2) a record of the student's performance on a test recognized, acceptable, and interpretable by the senior institutions.

4 - Student job-placement

As the very critical step in the job-placement function of vocational counseling and assistance, successful performance of this key-step task requires up-to-date, accurate, labor-market information, and an effective means for transmitting the full qualifications and special skills, if any, of the students.

D - Planning and Evaluating Programs of:
1 - Academic Instruction

Customarily, appraisal techniques in this area are reflected in the collection of appropriate descriptive data for groups of students; i.e., in terms of averages, ranges, variabilities, etc. Several approaches for academic program evaluation are feasible. They include, (1) the systematic study of high school test data and high school records of all incoming students. This affords a vast amount of basic, essential information; (2) systematic analysis of high school records and test data for student applicants who do not matriculate; thus helping in defining the appropriate scope and appeal of its program offerings; (3) cooperative and comparative curricula study to better effect secondary school-junior college-senior college articulations; (4) develop techniques for appraisals of instructional programs by means of locally-validated and constructed tests; (5) probably the single most potent device for finding out how well an instructional program prepares students, is through follow-up study. In terms of further education, and/or job success, what happens to the junior college graduate?

2 - Vocational Instruction

Effective planning and evaluation of vocational instruction requires patient and technical gathering and analysis of employment information. Additionally, the area of follow-up studies should not be neglected. With certain vital and technical industries tending to concentrate trained manpower demands in certain areas of the country; e.g. stomic energy, aero-space and defense, to name but a few representative examples, a national need arises to insure the orderly, organized training of specialized manpower which may be directed to existing employment opportunities in distant regions of the countries.

3 - Other Instruction

Essentially, the needs for adult, part-time instruction, as well as the criteria for the assessment of such instruction, originates within the local community. Once again, the junior college must look to its own resources to discover meaningful needs, and appropriately direct graduates to these opportunities.

4 - Teaching Staff Evaluation

There are several known criteria which may be employed in the appraisal of junior college faculties. We confine ourselves here to a description of those appraisals which are made possible by careful observance of student characteristics, i.e., evaluating the 'end-product' of the teaching-learning syndrome; and the Composite Faculty Evaluation Plan (3) which is a combination of: (a) student ratings; (b) colleague ratings; and (c) self-evaluation ratings.

(3) Blai, Jr., Boris, "Evaluation of Faculty Instruction", Scientia Paedagogica Experimentalis, (International Journal of Experimental Research)Vol.2,1968, Gent, Belgium.

This is an enterprise in which no teacher should be placed on the spit, but rather one in which whole departments are helped to find out what impact they have upon the students. Another helpful device is for several junior colleges to collect similar kinds of data and compare notes on their findings. The particular consistencies and differences between institutions may well give rise to questions rather easily over-looked if only a single campus conducts such self-analysis studies.

5 - Student Personnel Program Assessment

This type of critical, objective self-analysis no more lends itself to the purchase of "off the shelf" packaged techniques than does the assessment of instruction. Once again, it must be developed within the faculty of the college and also carefully follow the classic pattern of scientific inquiry: (a) state the purposes of the program; (b) establish the criteria by which the success of the program will be judged; (c) apply the criteria and interpret the evidence that accumulates. Fruitful results may be anticipated to the extent that the school is willing to provide the necessary resources and seek out the essential information necessary to achieve truly objective analyses.

6 - Evaluating College Administrative Policies

As with teaching assessment and evaluation of the student personnel program, administrative policies self-evaluation is contingent upon the existence of unambiguous statements of administrative functional tasks, and also upon agreement regarding the various criteria by which its degrees of success may be adjudged. With these two elements clearly delineated, positive, useful results may be anticipated.

E - Essential Techniques for Junior College Evaluation

Many of the techniques for self-evaluation may be locally developed. However, others lend themselves more readily to regional or group action, as well as those which might best be achieved on a nation-wide basis. Following is a summary, comprehensive enumeration of such self-appraisal needs and techniques.

1 - Construction of or adaptation of an academic test for adults.
2 - Development and validation of interview techniques to estimate both extent of the students experience in a field and his likely skill level.
3 - Development of a standard system to ascertain and keep current with local and regional employment needs.
4 - Development of a standard pattern to describe students in meaningful ways to prospective employers.
5 - Development of a standardized technique for describing the prospective transfer student to 4-year schools.

6 - Development of tests to measure academic characteristics of student groups to be used for the purpose of assessing programs of instruction.
7 - Development of tests to measure non-cognitive characteristics of student groups to assess such variables as the collegiate environment or 'press'; effects of home environment on personal-social adjustments of students; shifting values, etc.
8 - Development of a clearing-house for employment information and maintenance of applicant qualifications records.
9 - Joint study to ascertain characteristics of successful transfer students. Collaterally, development of institutional characteristics of the receiving 4-year school, to assist the 2-year school counselors in counseling future transferees.
10 - Joint development of transfer agreements describing the acceptable levels of academic achievement and test performance for transfer to 4-year schools.
11 - Cooperative studies of college and high school curricula to facilitate continuity in the sequence of academic programs offered by them.
12 - Development of criterion definitions for meaningful study of junior college administrative practices.
13 - Local validation of high school records and test data as predictors of success, both for academic and vocational students.
14 - Development of appropriate measures of vocational interest, skills, and aptitudes, to assist in vocational guidance.
15 - Development of follow-up studies of former students for use in curricular revisions; including both vocational and academic programs.
16 - Development of student personnel program statement of goals and evaluation criteria.

In seeking to develop these various techniques and policy statements, cooperation is a key element in the planning and conduct of the self-appraisal program. It is an approach that must be put to work in order for the self-evaluation program to succeed. Probably a good three-quarters of the junior college needs in this area call for maximum cooperation among the various elements; local faculties and staff personnel, as well as regional area junior colleges and nation-wide ones as well. Every opportunity for closer cooperative action among the junior colleges in a local area, state or region, and nationally, should be explored constantly. The idea of cooperation, rather than independence needs to become the watchword among junior college personnel.

In many cases, the institutional research needs of individual institutions have already reached the point at which full-time professional research people have become a part of the college staff -- organized, as scope of program dictates, into an independent (organizationally) office of institutional research (4), customarily reporting directly to the president of the college.

---

(4) Blai, Jr. Boris, "Institutional Research - A Junior College Management Tool", The Journal of the College & University Personnel Association, Feb. 1969, V.20, No.2

As Dobbins and Turnbull conclude, "In short, it takes no more than a brief look at the appraisal problems facing junior colleges to become reasonably certain that the time has come for many junior colleges to add an institutional research office and not be self-conscious about it." (5)

F - Conclusion

In the words of President Stuart E. Marsee of El Camino College, "In preparing for the future, higher education must and will rely more upon institutional research to guide its development. Research will be a necessary instrument in the evaluation of the entire educational program, including such areas as teaching methods, curriculum needs, student characteristics and achievements, faculty, faculty and student relationships, budget, space utilization, enrollment and administrative effectiveness."

G - Epilog

A fitting summary statement regarding Junior College Self-Appraisal Techniques are the views of President Michael A. Duzy of Harcum Junior College who recently observed, "Such fundamental questions as, 'what is the college attempting to do for its students?' evoke thoughtful and searching discussions among teachers. The resulting consensus does much to help instructors to zero in with greater accuracy on student needs and objectives. It makes education meaningful. Continued scrutiny of course content and program offerings makes for greater relevance -- an ideal unfurled on many a student revolutionary banner today. Continued search for student opinion and reaction, for alumnae criticism and evaluation adds an objectivity to developing guidelines which assure quality and excellence." (underlining supplied)

Boris Blai, Jr. Ed.D.
Director of Research

(5) Dobbins, John E. & Turnbull, William W. "The Need for New Appraisals Techniques in Junior Colleges." Junior College Student Personnel Programs, (A Report to Carnegia Corporation) American Association of Junior Colleges, Washington, D.C. Nov. 1965